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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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THE OPERATIONAL IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND (U)


by

Worth Carter

Major, USAF

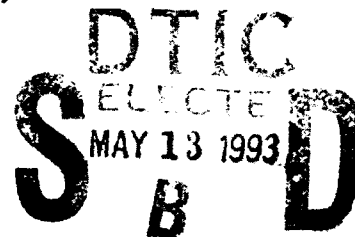
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The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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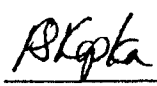


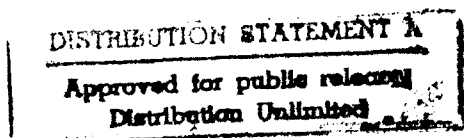
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**Abstract of
THE OPERATIONAL IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF
UNITED STATES STRATEGIC COMMAND**

As the Cold War drew to a close, a new unified command was born, that was originally conceived at the height of the Cold War in the late fifties and sixties. However, the environment of the time, specifically interservice rivalry and a fear of losing turf or mission responsibility, thwarted all efforts to implement this new command. Ironically, following the end of the epic struggle with the Soviet Union, this new command with responsibility for all strategic nuclear weapons stood up on June 1, 1992, nearly six months after the formal demise of the Soviet Union. Is this new command needed and what can it provide? The United States Strategic Command, although conceived in a period fundamentally different from today provides the tools that are imperative to maintain a stable world in the nuclear arena. The command organization adds many advantages, including the clear separation of nuclear deterrence from conventional war fighting at the CinC level. Placing all strategic forces under a single commander offers many advantages including: producing a clearer more direct chain of command, providing a unified effort for nuclear planning and execution, clearly separating the responsibilities of nuclear deterrence and conventional war fighting, and creating a single voice for all matter relating to nuclear forces. Each of these areas is vital in the near term, and the dedication of a single CinC with ultimate responsibility for these interrelated areas will increase the efficiency of forces at the operational level. While the threat of global nuclear war has been greatly reduced, the challenges in the nuclear arena are more varied and complex than ever before, and CINCSTRAT can have a fundamental role in the shaping of this current morass. This paper also offers some recommendations that could be incorporated into the responsibilities of CINCSTRAT, including planning for the use of conventional weapons to deter or negate nuclear capabilities, taking over responsibility for all nuclear weapons including non-strategic nuclear weapons, and finally integrating strategic nuclear defense under CINCSTRAT.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER I Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER II Policy Foundations	2
CHAPTER III Before STRATCOM.....	4
CHAPTER IV The Current Environment.....	8
CHAPTER V Command Organization	11
CHAPTER VI Flexibility for the Emerging World.....	16
CHAPTER VII CINCSTRAT and Conventional Weapons.....	22
CHAPTER VIII CINCSTRAT and Strategic Defense.....	24
CHAPTER IX Conclusion and Recommendations.....	25
ENDNOTES.....	26
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	28

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On June 1, 1992 the new United States Strategic Command was created. For the first time in history the planning, targeting, and command of all strategic nuclear forces are under the direction of a single unified commander. Navy and Air Force leaders past and present have both applauded and chastised this new command. The concept for such a command was born in the late fifties, but was shelved due to the inability of the services, specifically the Air Force and Navy, to come to agreement on the concept for the command. In this paper I will show the background behind the creation of United States Strategic Command and the rationale for it, highlighting some of the arguments both pro and con for its creation, posit some added areas of responsibility for CINCSTRAT, and in the end come to a conclusion regarding the utility of this new command from an operational perspective. Before jumping into the crux of paper the policy foundations and a brief history of how strategic nuclear forces arrived at their current state will be articulated.

CHAPTER II

POLICY FOUNDATIONS

The foundations of our national and military nuclear deterrent strategy begin with the National Security Strategy of the United States and are further specified by the National Military Strategy of the United States. In the most recent National Security Strategy of the United States the need for continued military strength is clearly articulated by the national interests and objectives. The fundamental objective is stated as follows: "Foremost, the United States must ensure its security as a free and independent nation, and the protection of its fundamental values, and institutions, and people. This is a sovereign responsibility which we will not abdicate to any other nation or collective organization."¹ Paramount in achieving this fundamental objective is continued strategic deterrence and defense. "Deterring nuclear attack remains our top priority. We must still possess modern strategic nuclear forces and a reliable warning system."² Despite the major changes that have occurred in the past few years, the President is clear in his priority regarding the continued need for strategic nuclear deterrence.

The National Military Strategy builds upon the fundamental objective of ensuring the survival of the United States by specifying how the United States military forces will do this. The most fundamental of the means to ensure the survivability of the United States is to: "Deter any aggression that could threaten the security of the United States and its allies and -- should deterrence fail -- repel or defeat military attack and end conflict on terms favorable to the United States, its interests and its allies."³ Further, the National Military Strategy clearly states that nuclear deterrence continues to be the "number one defense priority of the United States."⁴

From this quick look at the national security strategy and the national military strategy of the United States, it is apparent that nuclear deterrence remains a fundamental part of the landscape of future United States military forces. Despite the questioning and debate of numerous academicians regarding the utility of nuclear weapons in the changed world of the late

twentieth century, the national command authorities of the United States understand the utility of nuclear forces. In short, nuclear weapons preserved the peace between the superpowers for 45 years, and as long as other nations possess nuclear weapons, the United States will continue to need such weapons.

CHAPTER III

BEFORE STRATCOM

Since the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and the resultant surrender of the Japanese, nuclear deterrence has been the fundamental starting point of United States national military strategy. For over 45 years in an epic struggle with the "evil empire", our national leaders depended upon the Strategic Air Command (SAC) of the United States Air Force and the submarine launched ballistic missiles of the United States Navy to provide sufficient nuclear weapons targeted at the Soviet Union to keep the "bear at bay."

The centerpiece of the current United States nuclear deterrent strategy is based upon the Strategic TRIAD. The TRIAD consists of land based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), and intercontinental nuclear bombers provided by the Air Force, and submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) provided by the Navy. Each of the legs has unique and complementary characteristics. The ICBMs provide rapid response to an attack, with their capability of launching in moments, and striking targets on the other side of the world in less than thirty minutes. The bomber provides flexibility in what is referred to as "the man in the loop," to allow more efficient use of weapons. The bomber also provides stability, as it can be launched as a show of force to demonstrate United States resolve, and a portion of the bomber force can remain airborne for long periods to ensure survivability. Finally, the bomber is the only system in the TRIAD that can be recalled once launched. The submarine launched ballistic missiles provide rapid response and virtual certainty of survivability because of the submarines ability to hide from potential enemies. These forces have ensured the United States has not had to fight a nuclear war by providing the capability that would retaliate and inflict "unacceptable damage" upon an adversary that attacked the United States.

To virtually any military person and even most citizens, the concept of deterrence and the attributes of the TRIAD seem so basic that ethos of the concept was seemingly derived from some brilliant and logical mind. History however, provides a less than perfect picture. In re-

ality, each of the three nuclear delivery systems was developed independently by the services and with little thought of how they would interface or complement each other. The Army Air Force was the first service to have the capability of carrying nuclear weapons with the manned bomber. The B-29 was the first of these bombers, and was simply the primary bomber in the Pacific during World War II, and therefore was the first aircraft to carry a nuclear weapon and the only aircraft to actually deliver one on an enemy target. As a result of the success of long range bombing in World War II SAC was formed in 1946 and it would become the primary nuclear deterrent force in the late 1940s, 1950s and the early 1960s. While the first few years of SAC were lean monetarily, the Korean War, NSC - 68 and an Eisenhower strategy that focused on Mutual Assured Destruction allowed SAC budgets to increase dramatically and thousands of bombers were produced and many discarded as obsolete in as short a time as five years. Between 1948 and 1960 five new types of bombers entered the SAC inventory including the B-50, B-36, B-47, B-52 and B-58. By 1959 SAC had over 2,000 long range bombers.⁵

While SAC was concentrating on the development of long range bombers the Soviets were working on the development of long range missiles. This development of the long range missile by the Soviets was actually a result of the inability of the Soviets to produce a capable intercontinental bomber.⁶ The launching of Sputnik demonstrated the Soviet's missile capability and suddenly the fear of the "evil empire" possessing nuclear weapons that could be launched and delivered against the United States in approximately thirty minutes, galvanized America's desire for its own intercontinental missiles. Ironical, is the fact the Soviets introduced the ICBM as a result of their technical inability to produce a capable bomber, while the United States rapidly advanced ICBM research, development and production, because of the perceived lead the Soviets had acquired in the fielding of ICBMs. During this same time, the eternal feud between the Air Force and the Navy, led the Navy to develop the capability of carrying and launching ballistic missiles from its nuclear powered submarines. The first ICBMs were operational in 1959 and the first SLBMs in 1960. All three legs of the TRIAD were however

developed independently with virtually no interaction between the Navy and the Air Force. The fact that the three systems have provided unique and complementary characteristics in providing nuclear deterrence is more an accident than design and the logic for the TRIAD was developed after the deployment of all three systems.

This lack of coordination between the Navy and Air Force created power struggles in the late 1950s and early 1960s, that led to the formation of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff (JSTPS). In April of 1958 General Thomas Power, CINCSAC, pointed out that he was charged as the specified commander to coordinate attacks against many strategic targets nominated in separate lists by other specified and unified commanders. With the advent of missiles, strategic attacks would be adequate only if every facet of the operation were prepared in advance. Because of the defense reorganization act of 1958, the Air Force assumed a unified strategic command might be organized to control Air Force strategic air and missile forces and Navy Polaris equipped submarines. By April of 1959 the Joint Chiefs of Staff began studying how command and control could be exercised over the Polaris weapon system. General Thomas D. White, Air Force Chief of Staff requested establishment of a unified US strategic command. General Power supported the proposal. Admiral Burke, Chief of Naval Operations, was vehemently opposed to the idea feeling the proposal was unsound. The unified strategic command was not established. Instead, the Joint Strategic Planning Agency was created and General Power was designated director, strategic target planning. A Navy admiral was made deputy director, and officers from all the services, and representatives from the unified commands were included in the group. Navy Polaris submarines remained assigned to the naval components in unified commands.⁷ It was a compromise decision that resulted from the reluctance of the Navy to allow SAC to have planning authority for SLBMs.⁸ It was following the creation of the JSTPS that the logic of the TRIAD was finally developed.

At the time of the creation of the JSTPS the United States possessed approximately 5,437 strategic nuclear warheads including approximately 1,951 bombers, 72 ICBMs, and 48 SLBMs. It would stand to reason this number would decrease as the integration between the

Navy and Air Force increased and the capabilities of new weapons were greatly enhanced. In reality by 1970, the numbers of total warheads had increased slightly to 5,522 but the mix had shifted to 1,054 ICBMs, 656 SLBMs, but only 600 long range bombers as many of the older bombers had been retired.⁹ The reasons for this are many, including the lower cost of missiles, the shorter flight times to targets of missiles and probably most important, the increased number of missiles fielded by the Soviet Union. By the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis the Soviets possessed approximately 400 nuclear warheads, 50 of which were ICBMs, while by 1970 the Soviets possessed approximately 1,800 warheads and by 1974 the Soviets had 2,400 nuclear warheads of which 1618 were ICBMs.¹⁰ Again it looks as if the United States in many ways followed the Soviet lead of concentrating on the land based missile force, while at the same time greatly increasing the number of SLBMs. This, "follow the other guy " mentality is evident throughout the entire period of the Cold War. I have already mentioned two instances, but there are many more. More often than not the Soviets followed the United States, because of their inferior technology base, but in the case of ICBMs and an Anti Ballistic Missile Defense system, it was the United States that followed the Soviets. Soviet developments and deployments that followed United States initiative include the atomic bomb, forward based strategic bombers, the hydrogen bomb, forward deployed land based missiles, submarine launched ballistic missiles, a supersonic bomber, multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles and many more.¹¹ In short, the arms race was a microcosm of the Cold War, action on one side followed by reaction by the other side, exacerbated by interservice rivalry.

CHAPTER IV

THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Hopefully from the previous discussion it is obvious that the lack of unified effort in regards to nuclear weapons may well have been instrumental in the massive arms race that occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union and among the United States Air Force and Navy. Even if we were still in the world of 1985 or before, it would be important to review our strategic nuclear policy and question strategy and policy regarding the need for over 10,000 strategic nuclear warheads in the United States arsenal. But it is not 1985, 1975 or 1955. It is 1993 and the world is very different than it was five years ago, and the very foundations of our international policies must be reexamined, rewritten and implemented quickly to move forward in a world that has more potential for peace and stability, than at any previous time in the Twentieth Century. However, there is also the possibility of tremendous instability and a return to a multi-polar world full of age old quarrels and confrontations that could have disastrous consequences. Two assumptions are readily apparent. First, the number of strategic nuclear weapons will be greatly reduced in the future. Secondly, there are still threats in the world that require the United States to maintain strategic nuclear weapons.

Reducing the numbers of nuclear weapons has already started in earnest. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) was signed by the United States and Soviet Union on July 31, 1991 reducing the numbers of strategic nuclear weapons on each side by approximately one third. Ten or even five years ago this would have been a monumental agreement that would have set the background and framework for possible further agreements in the long term, but in the dynamic environment of arms control in the 1990s the treaty was virtually obsolete in less than 60 days. On September 27, 1991 President Bush announced he was ordering 450 ICBMs and all nuclear bombers off of nuclear alert. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney called this "the single biggest change" ¹² in United States nuclear weapons deployment

in the last four decades. Since the 1950s approximately one third of United States strategic bombers such as the B-52 have been maintained in a ready to launch configuration in the event of a nuclear attack to ensure their survivability. The 450 ICBMs that were taken off alert consist of all of the Minuteman II missiles. These are the oldest of the missiles in the United States inventory and carry a single nuclear warhead. President Bush further called upon the elimination of all land based ICBMs with the capability of carrying multiple warheads. This proposal reflects the Bush administration view that multiple warhead (MIRVed) land based missiles are the most destabilizing of weapons. They are considered destabilizing because they are in essence a first strike weapon. Land based missiles with multiple warheads would be a very attractive target for an enemy.¹³ The attacked may feel impelled to launch these missiles on warning to ensure their survivability and a reciprocal response to the attacker. From this perspective land based multiple warhead missiles are destabilizing.

The call for elimination of MIRVed land based missiles, became the foundation for START II. START II will effect all current United States land based missiles on nuclear alert. The Peacekeeper with ten independently targetable warheads will be deactivated, while the Minuteman III with three independently targetable warheads will be demirved to make it a single warhead missile. This will leave the United States with a land based missile force of approximately five hundred single warhead missiles. The remaining inventory of United States strategic nuclear weapons will consist of 18 Trident subs carrying 432 SLBMs, and a bomber force of approximately 96 B-52Hs and 97 B-1Bs. The former Soviets will also reduce land based missiles under START I and START II. Overall nuclear warheads will be reduced by approximately two-thirds.¹⁴

Two important points are manifest in the current environment. First, the number of strategic nuclear weapons are decreasing and will probably continue in that direction. Secondly, the Navy has a significantly increased share of the number of nuclear weapons on day to day alert and an increased share of the total number of strategic nuclear weapons. From a national standpoint, these are two reasons for the creation of United States Strategic

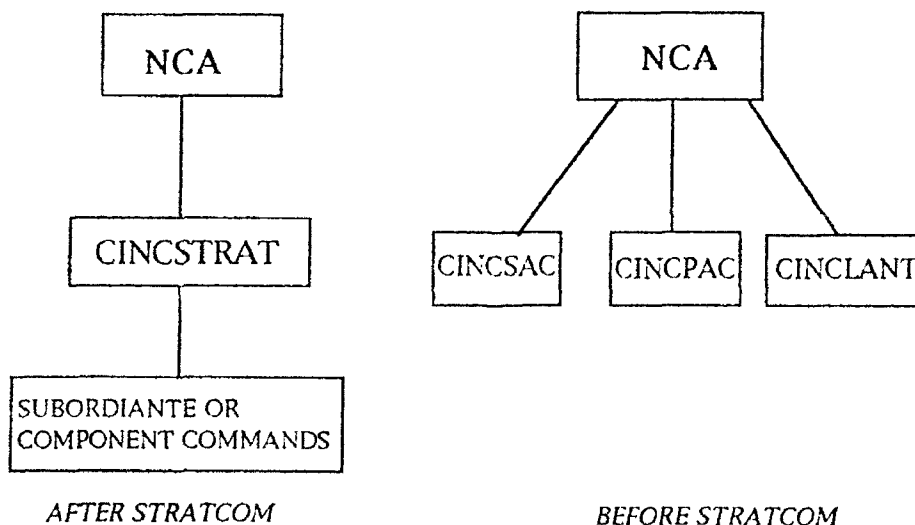
Command. The need to more closely integrate nuclear forces as numbers decrease, and as Defense Secretary Dick Cheney stated, "It emphasizes our desire to pursue as much jointness as we can within the Department."¹⁵

CHAPTER V

COMMAND ORGANIZATION

Considering the preceding identified major reductions in nuclear strategic weapons why was a new command created from an operational perspective and what are its advantages over the old structure? First and foremost, the new command provides a single spokesperson for strategic nuclear weapons. A single spokesperson that is a Unified Commander of all strategic nuclear forces. This by itself, should greatly reduce the competition for unneeded redundancy. A single CinC with a joint war fighting perspective should balance the need for competing weapons and provide the optimum force mix. Alternating the job between an Air Force general and Navy admiral should further increase jointness and reduce service in-fighting. While a cursory glance at the Unified Organizational Chart (see figure 1), and how STRATCOM fits into that structure may indicate a layer of bureaucracy that was heretofore nonexistent, a more detailed analysis should provide insight into the advantages STRATCOM has to offer.

FIGURE 1



Prior to the activation of STRATCOM the command and responsibility of nuclear forces flowed from the National Command Authorities (NCA) directly to CINCSAC, CINCPAC and CINCLANT. The Strategic Air Command, an Air Force specified command owned, advocated, trained and equipped all its forces in virtual isolation from the Navy forces under CINCPAC and CINCLANT. The only real meeting of the two forces occurred within the planning stages, in the JSTPS. In essence, the Air Force did its thing while the Navy followed a separate path. Under the new system with STRATCOM as a unified command, both the Air Force and Navy train and equip their separate forces, but when operational, those forces fall under the command of CINCSTRAT. In addition, CINCSTRAT like CINCEUR or CINCPAC is the primary advocate for the types and numbers of weapons needed in his theater (in this case the strategic nuclear theater). The services primary responsibility is to train and equip those forces requested by CINCSTRAT, just as they are for CINCEUR or CINCCENT. This separation of training and equipping from planning and war fighting should in theory allow CINCSTRAT to concentrate on determining the weapons and policies needed for the nuclear mission.

At this point, critics might well argue that this has always been true, but it was simply done along separate Air Force and Navy lines. In reality however, this was not the case. In the case of CINCSAC, he not only had the responsibility for the nuclear theater, but because of the inherent conventional capability of the bomber and the tanker fleet, he was often required to balance nuclear and conventional requirements. Whether this harmed capability, or resulted in more weapons than needed is impossible to prove. However, one thing is clear, when nuclear systems were used in a conventional role, problems arose, specifically unity of command problems. In both Korea and Vietnam nuclear bombers were used in a conventional role. In both cases, command and operational control of the aircraft remained with SAC. The use of B-52s in Vietnam is the classic example. Mission planning, target selection and logistical support were all directed by SAC Headquarters. Even by the end of the war in Southeast Asia in Linebacker II "CINCSAC used his specified command authority and coordinated targets di-

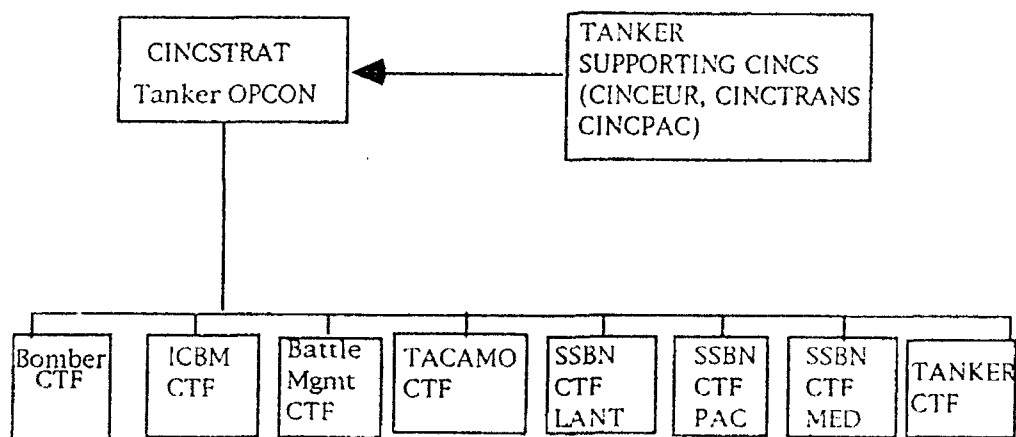
rectly with the Joint Chiefs of Staff."¹⁶ After the first three days of Linebacker II and numerous problems, an ad-hoc arrangement coordination process was used to give PACOM sole responsibility for air operations over Vietnam. The ad-hoc arrangement worked but, the fundamental requirement for unity of air power went unfulfilled."¹⁷ A theater commander would seem to have been far more appropriate in such a scenario. During Desert Shield and Desert Storm the bombers were actually chopped to CINCCENT and SAC was used only in an advisory capacity.¹⁸ This worked with outstanding results and adds credence to the separation of nuclear and conventional war fighting at the operational level.

A counter argument to this recommendation for separation of nuclear and conventional control could come from those desirous of maintaining a structure much like the old structure. Advocates of this type structure would posit the need for training, equipping, and war fighting all within the same organization. In the case of the Air Force, the Commander of Air Combat Command (COMACC) if made a specified commander could employ the bomber and missile forces just as CINCSAC had done in the past. However, this type of arrangement would present the same problems encountered by CINCSAC but to an even larger degree. COMACC is responsible for training and equipping a multitude of forces to provide to theater CinCs. Adding to this the responsibility of planning and employing the Air Force strategic nuclear forces would create an organization immersed in power struggles regarding the priorities of nuclear and conventional systems and subsystems. No doubt, those battles will occur with the new organizational structure, but they will be fought at the appropriate level between the war fighting CinCs that have responsibility for their respective theaters including the strategic nuclear theater. Further, division of responsibility for training and equipping and actual war fighting is an inherent and desirable characteristic of the military system. The war fighting CINC is and should be the primary spokesperson for the capabilities needed within his area of responsibility. The services and commands will undoubtedly have some say in regard to the specifics of the weapon systems provided, but should not into the needed capability. The alignment of the nuclear arena in this type arrangement is simply consistent with the rest of the

Department of Defense. It is particularly important to have this single voice in regards to the planning programming and budgeting process. The Unified CinCs, as a result of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 have more responsibility than ever before to provide comments and recommendations to be used in planning proposed DOD policy, strategy and force guidance for programming.¹⁹

This new command structure also adds flexibility to the war fighting CinCs, not only CINCSTRAT, but the regional CinCs as well. Just as the regional CinCs use a building block approach for their command and control organization for a given operation or contingency, CINCSTRAT can do the same in the nuclear arena. Depending upon the situation CINCSTRAT may require forces from COMACC, CINCLANTFLT, and CINCPACFLT or if the situation is less intense or limited geographically he may require only forces from one or two of the aforementioned. The new organization allows CINCSTRAT to tailor his forces to the situation, and allows for resources that are not required to remain available for other areas. Following is an organizational chart depicting the possible forces CINCSTRAT has available.

FIGURE 2



*CTF - COMMANDER, TASK FORCE²⁰

Explanation of Terms for Preceding Chart

Bomber CTF - B-52, B-1, B-2 Assets From 8AF

ICBM CTF - Minuteman III and Peacekeeper Assets From 20AF

Battle Management CTF - EC-135, RC-135, U-2, TR-1 Assets From 2AF

TACAMO - Navy Command and Control and Reconnaissance Aircraft

SSBN CTF LANT, PAC, MED - Nuclear Subs Capable of launching SLBMs

Tanker CTF - KC-135s

Depending upon the situation CINCSTRAT may elect to use all or a portion of these forces. This type flexibility is paramount in the new emerging world which will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

FLEXIBILITY FOR THE EMERGING WORLD

Critics might argue the need for strategic nuclear planning, or a separate command for strategic nuclear forces is an archaic concept. They feel the threat of all out nuclear war weapons is virtually nonexistent. While the possibility of all out nuclear war is indeed remote, there are a number of other factors that must be considered. The number of weapons on the side of the former FSU and the United States will continue to decrease significantly in the near term. However, the complexity of planning for or deterring the use of strategic nuclear weapons has increased many fold. First, the former Soviets remain a formidable nuclear power and while the changes have been positive, there is no assurance that future change will continue to be positive. In addition, the former Soviet Union now consists of four nuclear powers (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan) rather than a single unified power. While the total number of weapons will continue to decrease, the complexity of targeting problems and policy development will increase. Problems with policy have already surfaced in the attempt to gain ratification of SALT II in the four republics. Further, China will continue to increase its capability in strategic nuclear weapons. Finally, the spread of nuclear weapons, particularly to third world nations continues at an alarming rate. While the Former FSU and China are the only nations expected to have long range nuclear missiles capable of threatening the United States in the next decade, many nations throughout the world will have the capability to threaten United States' interests with nuclear weapons.²¹ The means to deliver those weapons is also growing significantly. In total, there are approximately 34 countries with short and intermediate range ballistic missiles, with ranges between 70 and 4,750 kilometers.²²

The fact the FSU continues to be a formidable nuclear power is the least complicated of the emerging problems, although still significant. Essentially, the same plans, targets, procedures and options should continue to provide a deterrent to all out nuclear war. However, the

options needed for even dealing with the former Soviets are far greater than against a USSR. From a planning standpoint we certainly should not consider all the republics as unified, and certain to have the same outlook upon nuclear war with the United States. But, the even more alarming problem is how to deter smaller countries, particularly third world countries from using nuclear weapons. The United States and the FSU have spent nearly 40 years in a world dominated by nuclear weapons. The leaders on each side are well aware of the destruction capability and consequences of using nuclear weapons. The so called "rational actor" theory has worked and worked well. But, how rational is a Saddam Hussein or a Moamar Ghadaffy. The sad truth is we do not know, and if we use the old planning philosophy emphasizing capability not intentions, we are required to have some plan for dealing with such regional thugs in the future, and not only from a conventional war scenario, but nuclear as well. I am not inferring the United States will face a strategic nuclear war with one of these regional thugs, but the need to provide a deterrent to these potential tyrants is imperative. Such an individual, having spent years and millions to acquire such a threatening capability, may not be deterred by conventional measures alone. CINCSTRAT can provide the planning and execution capability for a multitude of possible actions against such an occurrence.

The separation of conventional and nuclear is critical in this regard. By maintaining this planning and operational capability under a separate CinC offers many advantages. First, it separates the planning process among distinctly different scenarios, and therefore creates a threshold for the implementation or use of nuclear weapons. While that threshold has been in effect in the past, the total separation of conventional and nuclear planning has not been as distinct. In addition, the mere presence of, or fact that the United States has a plan to use nuclear weapons in response to their use by other than major powers will be a deterrent in itself. This option has always been available, and used at the national level, most notably and effectively by President Eisenhower in the mid 1950s using the strategy of "brinkmanship."²³ In many ways we have entered a world similar to the 1950s when the United States maintained a clear nuclear superiority over virtually all nations. However, these actions were by most estimates

bluffs, and carried out planning wise (I assume), on an ad-hoc basis. A more prudent course today would entail planning for those possibilities and doing so under the guise of a single nuclear dedicated commander.

I am not advocating a nuclear strategy to deter all conventional wars. The case is fairly clear that nuclear weapons do not deter war, however, they do seem to deter the use of nuclear weapons by the opposing side. This is precisely the type of deterrence I am referring too. Not deterrence of war, but deterrence of the use of nuclear weapons. This is another sound argument for the creation of the new Strategic Command. The mission of deterring the use of nuclear weapons has indeed been proven to be separate and distinct from the deterrence of war. Many times throughout the Cold War the Soviets and the United States engaged in war through surrogates, but the threat of nuclear escalation was in general minute. Direct confrontation between US and Soviet conventional forces was also somewhat prevalent, but direct confrontation of long range or strategic nuclear forces was almost nonexistent. Again, this indicates the need for separation of nuclear deterrence and conventional war fighting.

To carry my argument one step further, I advocate putting the control of all nuclear weapons and planning for their use under CINCSTRAT. Since the beginning of the Cold War many such as George Kennan have urged the United States to adopt a "no first use"²⁴ policy, but the fear of a conventional war against the Soviets and the inability of conventional forces to stop the Soviets, created a reluctance to adopt such a policy. Today however, the situation is significantly altered, the fear of war against the FSU in Europe is nearly nonexistent. It is hard to imagine a scenario in which the United States would use nuclear weapons before a foe had used such measures, or at least used weapons of mass destruction (chemical or biological). Therefore, I advocate the planning and control of both strategic and nonstrategic nuclear weapons be under the purview of CINCSTRAT. This would require CINCSTRAT to develop a group of plans for the use of nuclear weapons against virtually any possible adversary that possesses nuclear weapons. If the decision to use nuclear weapons was decided upon by the NCA, the options prepared under the deliberate planning process could be modified, using cri-

sis action procedures. In any event, the options should to the greatest degree possible, ensure the cessation of hostilities. Decisive force should be the hallmark, just as it is in conventional plans. A CinC knowledgeable in the full range of nuclear options would best be prepared to plan and execute such options. The decision to use nuclear weapons has many implications and should be the result of careful consideration. The CinC and the staff that should provide the inputs for such a decision should come from the foremost experts in the planning and use of nuclear weapons. The creation of Strategic Command has provided the nation with the ability to integrate those experts in a single body and those experts should be used in the most prudent ways possible.

Two assumptions are inherent in my argument. First, no current foe (with the exception of the FSU) has the ability to use nuclear weapons in large numbers. While there are a number of nations that either possess, or are striving to possess the capability to procure or build nuclear weapons, the number of weapons is relatively small. However, nuclear weapons used in even small numbers can have a devastating effect upon large numbers of forces and large areas. The need to respond in such a manner, as to terminate hostilities in the near term is imperative. Therefore, the ability to respond at all levels (nonstrategic and strategic nuclear weapons) is critical. A second assumption involves the availability of current nuclear weapons. The United States has agreed along with the FSU to withdraw and destroy all nuclear artillery shells, short range nuclear ballistic missile warheads, and to withdraw all tactical nuclear weapons from naval vessels and land based naval aircraft.²⁵ This leaves the options of using nuclear weapons confined to strategic nuclear weapons or land based aircraft. Current nuclear capable aircraft delivery platforms can deliver weapons from far outside the battle area with extreme accuracy. In addition, submarine based strategic missiles can do the same, with virtual impunity against the most sophisticated defenses. Given these two assumptions, I believe it far more prudent to put the planning and employment of all nuclear weapons under the direction of a single commander than to continue the current procedures. This would not negate the responsibility of the regional CinC to recommend when and if nuclear weapons were

needed in a particular scenario, but the planning for and actual employment would come from CINCSTRAT at the direction of the NCA.

Advocates of the current system might well argue that current regional CinCs or a small centralized joint planning staff could easily do the planning for nonstrategic and strategic nuclear weapons in their theaters, and leave the operational employment to Air Force and Navy major commands with direction from the NCA. This is in short, the way tactical nuclear weapons are currently planned for use.²⁶ The addition of small numbers of strategic weapons in the scenario might seem logical to some. However, I believe this is a potentially dangerous avenue. This treats nuclear weapons as any other machine of war, and sends a signal to the rest of the world that the United States takes such a view. This reduces the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons. Putting all nuclear weapons under a single commander sends an opposite signal. Secondly, it would expand the options available to the NCA at the theater level. This could enhance the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons in small to medium scale conflicts. It would send a clear signal to our potential adversaries that the use of any nuclear weapon has the potential to bring about a response, that he could not tolerate. In both cases, the creation of a clear nuclear threshold, and increased deterrence are positives that a Strategic Command could best provide.

There is one final argument that underscores the importance of a single CinC in charge of all nuclear weapons. As former CINCSAC Russel Dougherty states in Managing Nuclear Operations, "A nuclear command environment cannot be tolerant of weapons systems mistakes - the overall psychology of a nuclear command, must be marked, up and down command lines, by mutual trust and confidence, accepted discipline, and standardization of all procedures and actions."²⁷ Because of the arms race and the need for large numbers of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe during the Cold War, the feasibility of putting all nuclear weapons under the direction of a single commander was nonexistent. However, the new environment does allow for such a possibility, and while there is no doubt the individuals responsible for tactical nuclear weapons are dedicated professionals, the very fact that their primary mission is con-

ventional may have an effect upon the proficiency and standardization of nuclear procedures.

The sheer volume in numbers of people and weapons, make the overall standardization and reliability far more suspect. The creation of a nuclear weapons commander should make everyone feel safer, and create a more efficient environment.

CHAPTER VII

CINCSTRAT AND CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Thus far, I have made the case for absolute separation of nuclear deterrence and conventional war fighting, premising the result would give a clearer picture to the role of each. However, there is one area in which I believe CINCSTRAT should control conventional forces. Many academics and rightfully so, have posited the capability to deter the use of nuclear weapons by conventional means. In reality they have advocated the destruction of such a capability either before or after its use. This would in theory deter the further use by a nation-state, or deter the future use, and could even deter desire to gain such a capability by others. There is certainly a degree of logic and merit to such a policy. The particulars of when and how this could be used would be up to the NCA in concert with our allies, but the planning and execution could clearly come under the auspices of Strategic Command. A single dedicated command supported by the intelligence community could keep watch over the world's nuclear arsenal and capabilities and provide the alternatives and planning for such possibilities. Planning possibilities for such action are more feasible than ever before, due to the wide range of options available using the current generation of smart and stealth weapons.

John M. Collins, Senior Specialist in National Defense, addresses the possibility of conventional deterrence of nuclear weapons or nuclear deterrence by conventional means in his assessment of the National Military Strategy. Mr. Collins doubts the ability to be able to launch preemptive strikes more than once or twice due to the inability to generate public support.²⁸ However, it is probable that the conduct of one or two such strikes is all that would be needed to produce the desired deterrent effect. CINCSTRAT is the logical choice for the development of such plans and should have a direct line to the President regarding recommendations for actions and plans. As the single voice for strategic nuclear weapons he would be the best qualified to judge the risk other nuclear and potential nuclear powers present the United States.

Inherent in this assessment is the need to take a broad overall perspective in regards to nuclear weapons versus a regional perspective.

Technology has made the possibility of successful conventional strikes against nuclear facilities a reality. Current B-52s with Precision Guided Munitions or Precision Guided Weapons launched from submarines would provide the surprise, accuracy, and destruction capability needed for such an operation. In addition, there would be no requirement for base rights or over flight rights of neutral countries. In the near future the B-2 will be available for such missions. These stealthy aircraft with the ability to carry precision guided missions will be able to conduct strikes to virtually any target in the world and will do so with a maximum of two air refuelings and no other combat support aircraft required. A single B-2 will be able to carry 8 large penetrating weapons or 16 precision guided 2,000-LB. bombs, giving it the capability to destroy many of the type targets required in such a scenario.²⁹

There are many problems with conducting such strikes. The support of the world community along with domestic support from the United States. Any such missions would almost certainly require United Nations support. However, the need to conduct such missions may well become imperative in the future. From an operational perspective, the most efficient choice for the planning and preparation of options for such an event would be the United States Strategic Command.

CHAPTER VIII

CINCSTRAT AND STRATEGIC DEFENSE

There is a final area that I believe would be important in adding to the responsibility of CINCSTRAT. The integration of offense and defense under a single commander. In no other area do we separate offense and defense so completely. For most of the Cold War this has been a moot question, as there was no defense against an aggressor using strategic nuclear weapons (the short lived and small in scope ABM system is a notable exception). However with the advance of technology and the probability of at least a local defense in the future against ballistic missile attack, the need for integration is present. According to JCS Pub 3 - 12, "strategic defensive systems offer the potential of improving US deterrent posture by increasing the uncertainty of achieving it's attack objectives."³⁰ Further 3 - 12 states, "offensive and defensive forces must be integrated to ensure interoperability."³¹ It seems clear, that from a unity of command and effort standpoint, as well as economy of force and command and control simplicity, the need to have offensive and defensive forces under the same commander would be the best course of action, from an operational standpoint. This need to integrate offense and defense will become even more important as the Global Protection Against Limited Ballistic Missile Attack System (GPALS) becomes a reality.

This proposal would require a modification of the current Unified Command Plan to put United States Space Command under United States Strategic Command, and the particulars are beyond the scope of this paper. However, as budgets are reduced the combining of commands will be forced upon the military. From an operational standpoint, the integration of offense and defense makes sense, and with the missile forces of both the Air Force and Navy currently under STRATCOM the possibilities for operational expertise exchange and cross flow is great among the two commands. If not all of Space Command it would certainly make sense for the NORAD (North American Air Defense) portion to move under USSTRATCOM.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The activation of the United States Strategic Command at Offutt AFB, Nebraska on June 1, 1992 culminated a long difficult struggle to put all strategic nuclear forces under the direction of a single unified commander. As I have indicated this was a desire that goes all the way back to the late fifties and early sixties. In the new emerging world in which the threat of global war is greatly reduced this may seem to some to be closing the barn door after the horse is gone. However, this new concept although borne of a bygone era can well serve the nation in the emerging Post Cold War World. By integrating planning, targeting and command of all U.S. strategic nuclear forces under a single unified commander great strides are possible in the elimination of redundancy and the clear articulation of nuclear requirements in the future. In addition, by increasing the responsibilities of STRATCOM in the manner I have indicated even greater efficiencies can be produced. Putting all nuclear weapons under the command of STRATCOM could further entrench and solidify the nuclear threshold. Regional CinCs could focus their attentions squarely upon conventional war fighting. CINCSTRAT could act as the primary advisor to the NCA on all nuclear weapons matters. He would also take over the responsibility for planning and executing deterrent measures of a conventional nature, to include possible conventional strikes against nuclear weapons facilities. Finally, CINCSTRAT would integrate both offense and defense in the nuclear arena, providing unity of effort and simpler, more clear lines of command and control. These changes or additions would all add to the nuclear deterrent capability of United States forces, and put the needed tools in the hands of the operational commander responsible for nuclear deterrence at all levels.

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